

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please note and consider the claims in the application as identified below, with currently amended claims comprising markings in the form of strikethrough for deletions and underlining for additions.

Claims 1-18, canceled.

19. (original) A cooking utensil comprising:
a base member;
at least one bread-impaling spike coupled to and extending from said base member, said impaling spike comprising an elongated body portion and a piercing end portion for forming a cavity within a bread item, said elongated body portion comprises a plurality of planar surfaces formed together about and around a longitudinal axis to create a closed-form cross-sectional geometric shape configured to form at least one condiment receiving channel within said cavity of said bread item upon inserting a meat item;
an impaling system comprising:
a bread basket displaceable with respect to said bread-impaling spike and configured to receive and support said bread item therein; and
a guide system operable with said bread basket for aligning said bread basket and said contained bread item with said bread-impaling spike during displacement and for guiding said bread basket and said bread item onto said bread-impaling spike.

20. (original) The cooking utensil of claim 19, wherein said base member is operably connected to a heat source that conducts heat to said bread-impaling item for toasting at least one interior wall of said bread item defining said cavity.

21. (original) The cooking utensil of claim 19, further comprising a heat shield surrounding said bread-impaling spike.

22. (original) The cooking utensil of claim 19, wherein said impaling system comprises:

a bread basket comprising:

an open-end squeeze member comprising a planar member having first and second opposing ends formed into a cylinder so that said ends are facing each other and are separated an identified distance;

a handle attached to each of said ends of said squeeze member for facilitating the squeezing of said bread item;

at least one guide receiver coupled to said squeeze member; and

a guide system comprising at least one elongate guide coupled to said base member, said guide receiver receives said elongate guide, thus properly aligning said bread basket and said bread item with said bread-impaling spike to facilitate the impaling of said bread item.

23. (original) The cooking utensil of claim 22, wherein said bread basket further comprises a support portion formed over an upper end of said squeeze member for preventing upward movement of said bread item as it is impaled by said bread-impaling spike.

24. (original) The cooking utensil of claim 22, wherein said squeeze member comprises a configuration selected from the group consisting of mesh or solid.

25. (original) The cooking utensil of claim 19, wherein said impaling system comprises: an open-end bread basket comprising:

first and second round portions hinged together to create a squeeze shield; front and rear guide portions extending from respective ends of said first and second round portions;

handle portions extending from said front ends of said first and second round portions;

a guide system comprising:

first and second guide pins extending from and positioned on a side of said base member and spaced apart an identified distance; and

third and fourth guide pins extending from said base member and positioned on a side opposite that of said first and second guide pins, said third and fourth guide pins also spaced apart an identified distance so as to be symmetric with said first and second guide pins, said first and second guide pins configured to receive said rear guide portions there between and said third and fourth guide pins configured to receive said front guide pins there between once said squeeze shield is in a closed position.

26. (original) The cooking utensil of claim 25, further comprising a heat shield comprising a first portion coupled between said first and third guide pins and a second portion coupled between said second and fourth guide pins, said heat shield annularly surrounding said base member and encircling said bread-impaling spike.

27. (original) The cooking utensil of claim 19, wherein said impaling system comprises:
an open-ended bread basket comprising:
first and second curved plate portions pivotally coupled together by a hinged mechanism;
a crossing biased handle assembly configured to bias said first and second plates into an open position;
at least one guide bar extending down at least a portion of either of said first and second plate portions;
a guide system comprising:
an open-ended thin wall cylinder configured for receiving said bread basket therein upon said bread basket receiving said bread item and being closed and for guiding said bread basket over said bread-impaling spike; and
a wall extension extending from at least a portion of a rim of said cylinder, said wall extension functioning to guide said bread basket into an interior of said cylinder.

28. (original) The cooking utensil of claim 27, wherein said guide system functions as a

heat shield to protect the user from said bread-impaling spike.

29. (original) The cooking utensil of claim 19, wherein said impaling system comprises:
an open-end bread basket comprising:
a first plate;
a second plate pivotally coupled to said first plate, such that said first and second plates form a bread basket enclosure when in a closed position;
a plurality of protrusions extending from an interior surface of said first and second plates for providing increased grip on said bread item once retained therein;
a handle portion coupled to each of said first and second plates;
a guide system comprising:
a support rail juxtaposed to said bread-impaling spike and comprising a thin-walled cylinder that extends upward from said base member a pre-determined distance, said support rail comprising a through slot formed along at least a portion of a length of said support rail;
a sleeve slidably disposed within said support rail and stopped by a stopper positioned at an upper end of said support rail;
a biasing member disposed within said support rail for biasing said sleeve in an upward manner against said stopper; and
at least one connector rod extending from said sleeve at one end and coupling to said first plate of said bread basket at an opposite end, thus properly aligning and supporting said bread basket in an elevated and biased position above said bread-impaling spike, said bread basket being configured to travel in a bi-directional manner about said bread-impaling spike as said sleeve travels bi-directionally within said support rail, and wherein said rod travels within said slot to facilitate the displacement of said bread basket and to prohibit it from rotating.

30. (original) The cooking utensil of claim 29, wherein said biasing member comprises a

spring.

31. (original) The cooking utensil of claim 29, wherein said sleeve is comprised of thermo-plastic material capable of withstanding heat generated within said guide rail.
32. (original) The cooking utensil of claim 29, wherein said first and second plates are curved to match the curvature of a bread item.
33. (original) The cooking utensil of claim 29, further comprising handles coupled to each of said first and second plates for facilitating the opening and closing of said bread basket and the impaling of said bread item.
34. (original) The cooking utensil of claim 29, further comprising latching means for releasably latching said first plate to said second plate.
35. (original) The cooking utensil of claim 19, wherein said base member and said bread-impaling spike are operably coupled to a concave base mount configured for placement over a stove that functions as a heating source to heat said bread-impaling spike.
36. (original) The cooking utensil of claim 19, further comprising a guide system operable with said bread basket for facilitating the impaling of said bread item, said guide system functioning to align said bread basket and said contained bread item with said bread-impaling spike and to guide said bread basket and said contained bread item while impaling said bread item.
37. (original) The cooking utensil of claim 19, wherein said bread basket comprises a plurality of protrusions on an inner surface to increase the grip on said bread item.

38. (original) The cooking utensil of claim 19, further comprising a removably heat shield surrounding said bread-impaling spike for protecting the user while impaling said bread item.

39. (original) A cooking utensil comprising:
a base mount configured for placement over a stove element;
a bread-impaling spike coupled to and extending from said base mount, said impaling spike comprising an elongated body portion and a piercing end for forming a cavity within a bread item, said elongated body portion comprises a plurality of planar surfaces formed together about and around a longitudinal axis to create a closed-form cross-sectional geometric shape configured to form at least two condiment receiving channels within said cavity of said bread item upon inserting a meat item;
a bread basket for receiving and retaining said bread item comprising:
first and second curved plate portions pivotally coupled together by a hinged mechanism;
a crossing biased handle assembly configured to bias said first and second plates into an open position;
a guide system for receiving and aligning said bread basket and said contained bread item with said bread-impaling spike, said guide system comprising:
an open-end thin wall cylinder configured for receiving said bread basket therein upon said bread basket receiving said bread item and being closed and for guiding said bread basket over said bread-impaling spike; and
a wall extension extending from at least a portion of a rim of said cylinder, said wall extension functioning to guide said bread basket into an interior of said cylinder.

40. (original) The cooking utensil of claim 39, wherein said bread-impaling spike further comprises a rod extending therefrom and through a surface of said concave base mount, said rod configured to be in communication with said stove element, thus functioning as a heat sink to

heat said spike.

41. (original) The cooking utensil of claim 39, wherein said bread basket further comprises at least one guide bar extending down at least a portion of the length of said bread basket to facilitate proper orientation and alignment of said bread basket within said cylinder.
42. (original) The cooking utensil of claim 39, wherein said base member comprises a concave configuration.

Claims 43-46, canceled.